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TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM KZ
SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 1 MEETING WITH PA
HEAD DZHAKSYBEKOV

REF: A. ALMATY 2532
 1B. ALMATY 2464
 1C. ALMATY 2404

Classified By: Amb. John Ordway, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (SBU) Summary: In a July 3 meeting, the Ambassador discussed planning for President Nazarbayev's late September visit to the U.S. with Presidential Administration head Adylbek Dzhaksybekov. Dzhaksybekov said that Kazakhstan hopes to sign a WTO accession protocol during the visit. The Ambassador highlighted the need for progress on democratization, noting in particular concerns regarding freedom of the press and recent housing demolitions. The Ambassador informed Dzhaksybekov of Senator Lugar's upcoming visit to Kazakhstan, as well as an August 24 meeting with PA and Procuracy representatives to chart a way forward on political party training. End summary.

Nazarbayev Visit

12. (SBU) In an August 1 meeting with the Ambassador in Astana, Presidential Administration head Adylbek Dzhaksybekov indicated that planning for President Nazarbayev's late September visit to the U.S. was proceeding well. President George H.W. Bush had invited Nazarbayev to visit him in Kennebunkport, which he would do before his meetings in Washington. The GOK working group planning the visit would meet in a week where it would discuss the composition of the delegation.

13. (C) Dzhaksybekov said that Kazakhstan hoped to sign a WTO accession protocol with the U.S. as part of the visit. The Ambassador noted that much work remained to be done in the negotiations with USTR. Dzhaksybekov claimed that progress "depended on the U.S. side" and was mostly a political rather than a technical issue. He also claimed that making progress on Kazakhstan's accession would help the U.S. deal with Russia more effectively. The Ambassador informed Dzhaksybekov that USTR had been actively engaged with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and that USTR's lead negotiator had recently visited Kazakhstan for the July 12 TIFA Council meeting in Almaty. Dzhaksybekov said that WTO accession was important for Kazakhstan politically, but would not have a significant economic impact other than for certain metals suppliers.

14. (SBU) The Ambassador told Dzhaksybekov that the U.S. hoped for concrete progress on democratization in advance of President Nazarbayev's visit. There were particular concerns regarding freedom of the press. Dzhaksybekov noted

that the Democratization Commission is continuing its work and will wind up in December. He claimed that recent amendments to the media law (Ref A) would help the situation.

The Ambassador countered that the recent legislation, while possibly not as harmful as first thought, did not represent progress. The true test will be whether the independent press is allowed to keep publishing. Dzhaksybekov claimed there was "no repression" in Kazakhstan, pointing to the large number of newspapers that criticize the government on a regular basis.

¶ 15. (SBU) The recent violent conflict over housing demolitions in the Shanyrak neighborhood of Almaty (Ref B) was a terrible occurrence, the Ambassador noted. Dzhaksybekov concurred that the situation had not been handled well; the incident proved that serious problems can arise suddenly in any country. Dzhaksybekov said that the basic decision to bring order to the settlements was correct, but was not implemented in a wise way. The Ambassador stressed the need to help residents find alternative housing. Dzhaksybekov commented that most of the residents of neighborhoods like Bakay and Shanyrak were from rural areas of the country; the issue was part of the larger social problem of urbanization, where the government was reluctant to give out too many benefits for fear of attracting more residents to the cities and exacerbating the depopulation of the countryside.

Codel Lugar

¶ 16. (SBU) The Ambassador informed Dzhaksybekov that Senator Lugar would visit Kazakhstan August 18-20 in order to discuss non-proliferation issues. Dzhaksybekov said that Nazarbayev

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would be in Aktobe during that period following a visit to Sochi. They agreed to explore the option of a Lugar stop in Aktobe, since he is flying milair.

Political Party Training

¶ 17. (SBU) Referring to his July 3 meeting with PA deputy head Maulen Ashimbayev (Ref C), the Ambassador informed Dzhaksybekov that the Embassy had scheduled a meeting on August 24 in Astana with PA and Procuracy representatives in order to seek clarification of the scope of action for NGOs such as NDI and IRI in working with political parties. The U.S. sought both a clearer definition of what constituted financing of political parties, as well as input from the GOK on the shape of our future assistance programs.

¶ 18. (SBU) Dzhaksybekov commented that the U.S. needs to show the Procuracy what is done in the political party trainings in order to dispel the impression that they are some type of "seminar on revolution." He said that the GOK had studied the question and did not object to the work of IRI and NDI "as some other countries do."

ORDWAY